

**MILLSTONE TOWNSHIP
AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
JULY 22, 2020
MEETING MINUTES**

Chairman Butch called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

She read the adequate notice.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Butch, Butewicz, Peck (L 7:45 p.m.), Pinhas and Posten
Deputy Mayor Grbelja, Township Committee Liaison
Amy Mandelbaum, SADC
Steven Bruder, P.P., SADC
Elena Gable, P.P. , Township Planners

ABSENT: Asprocolas

MEETING MINUTES: June 24, 2020

Chairman Butch requested a change to the last paragraph on the first page to include that “this information will be posted on our Township Website for the Community”.

Ms. Pinhas made a Motion to approve the minutes with this addition and Ms. Butewicz offered a Second. Roll call Vote: Pinhas, Butewicz and Butch voted yes to approve the meeting minutes.

PUBLIC COMMENT PORTION: At 7:35 p.m., Chairman Butch opened the Meeting to the Public. Seeing no public in attendance, she closed the public comment portion at the same time.

CORRESPONDENCE: Chairman Butch advised that we are in receipt of the executed Municipal Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan Grant Agreement. She advised that one of the requirements of that Agreement is that we have an initial planning meeting, which we are having this evening.

Chairman Butch introduced Steven Bruder, Planning Manager of the SADC.

Mr. Bruder provided an overview of the program. Mr. Bruder offered that the SADC went thru a rule making process three years ago to assist the Municipal PIG partners to access competitive funding. One of the items was adding a competitive grant funding to the block grant. Secondly, they wanted to reinvigorate the Agricultural Advisory Councils (ACC) to become active partners in the grant process. Mr. Bruder provided that 11 years ago the PIG program came into existence. In many cases, the ACCs were not meeting the statutory requirements of the Grant. He explained that the SADC wants to give the ACC’s incentive to become active again and meet their statutory requirements. They want to beef up the ACCs’ involvement in the PIG process. He offered the importance of making sure that the Farmland Preservation Plans are updated and in sync with the local Master Plans. PIG Programs are getting older. The local Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plans should be updated every ten (10)

years. The policies of the ACCs should be re-evaluated and mapping should be updated.

Mr. Bruder advised that part of the annual planning review is that the SADC is requiring the ACCs to meet at least twice a year and they should go over the PIG application before submitting it. The SADC is also requiring that the governing body must take affirmative action and pass a Resolution in support of the grant applications.

Mr. Bruder advised the Council that the final version of these rules will be published final in the register shortly. He advised that the SADC wants to make sure that we support the Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan update. The grant is a 50% matching grant, up to \$20,000.00

Mr. Bruder went over what the expectations of the ACC's role would be. Planner Gable informed Mr. Bruder as to where she is at in updating the Plan. Chairman Butch stated that we had started on the process last year.

The timeline was discussed. The SADC reviews the Plan. The MCADB receives a copy of the Plan. After the Plan is reviewed, then the normal process of presentation and adoption of this Master Plan document by the Planning Board is done.

There was discussion as to the status of the County's Plan. Mr. Bruder advised that the County will have the spatial mapping. Changes in Millstone's ADA was discussed. Only two areas have been affected advised Chairman Butch so she does not see much change in the ADA.

Deputy Mayor Grbelja voiced her concerns that we have not be able to offer competitive prices due to the SADC appraisals and she explained. Presently, there are not comps available because the warehouse applications that are before the Boards are contingent upon approvals. Deputy Mayor Grbelja further provided that there are interior lots that have soils rated at 100 and the comps that are used by the SADC appraisers are for sandy Pineland soils of Lakewood. They do not match and are not comparable.

Deputy Mayor Grbelja explained the frustration with the comps and the offers made being made to landowners. She advised that desirable lands that are being lost as a result. The SADC has approved the offer but the offers are so low. Deputy Mayor Grbelja voiced her concern that the price a landowner had paid for the land coming into play as criteria. She stated that an individual should be paid for the value of the land presently not what the owner paid for the land. Deputy Mayor Grbelja stated that we are hurting what we know is our best asset.

Mr. Bruder discussed the information needed for reimbursement including work accomplished on the plan by the planner, the preparation time, hourly rate and the like must be documented and included. Mr. Bruder confirmed that no form is provided just comply with the criteria requested.

Deputy Mayor Grbelja confirmed that Mr. Peck arrived at 7:45 p.m.

Mr. Bruder clarified that in this initial consultation he wanted to make sure that as part of the process that there is a discussion of the policies of the Council and what the various policies are in place for preservation such as exception areas, minimum eligibility, ranking of farms and how they are prioritized. He stated that the plan must be clear on what those policies are.

Mr. Bruder stated that there must be two public meetings, one for the initial draft of the Plan and he confirmed that one of those meetings could be the public meeting where the Plan is being adopted by the Planning Board as part of the Master Plan.

Chairman Butch advised Mr. Bruder that we will try to coordinate with the County to get the ADA mapping. She discussed that if the County is not able to provide that to us in a timely manner, she feels that the ADA will not change much. She does not want this to hold Millstone up. Mr. Bruder will reach out to Ms. Honigfeld because he would like us to coordinate with the County. He wants to see where Ms. Honigfeld is with the mapping and feel that they should prioritize the mapping for us. Both Chairman Butch and Deputy Mayor Grbelja sit on the MCADB and have not seen anything from Ms. Honigfeld yet.

Chairman Butch stated that only two properties have been pulled out of the ADA for development. Mr. Bruder stated that if the ADA is not amended before the Plan adoption, for us to make those changes from the project area. There was discussion that this would change the formula.

Mr. Bruder advised that from the information that he had provided to the ACC, Millstone Township is #44 in terms of active agricultural acres.

The Council thanks Mr. Bruder for his attendance and direction in applying for the Grant.

OLD BUSINESS: Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan

Chairman Butch announced that the Council had reviewed and made changes to Sections 1, 3 and 9 and Planner Gable had incorporated those changes into the draft and provide that to the Council. This evening the Council will be addressing areas 2, 4 and 5. The last three sections, 6, 7 and 8 will be discussed at the August 26, 2020 Public Meeting. That meeting will be one of the two prescribed meetings for compliance for the Grant.

Chairman Butch, the Council and Ms. Mandelbaum went over the sections discussing changes and items to be included in the Plan and Planner Gable made those changes during the meeting.

Planner Gable will send this evening's edits to the Council.

Open Space Trust Report – Deputy Mayor Grbelja will provide next month. Chairman Butch advised that the costs were planning and engineering for the Thomas Baird Homestead.

Chairman Butch stated that Mr. Peplowski sold his tractor and is looking for a farmer to farm his 9 acres with perhaps a grain. The Council will reach out to see if we can seek him some assistance.

The Council thanked Ms. Mandelbaum and Ms. Gable for their attendance and assistance.

Seeing no further business, Ms. Butewicz made a Motion to adjourn and Ms. Pinhas offered a Second and at 9:45 the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,